

Over 10 Million Students Have Signed

October 21, 2009

Washington DC Rally

Lafayette Park - SE Quadrant 1:30pm - 3:00pm - Special Youth Safety Presentations

**Featuring International Movie Film Star - Grandmaster Gary Wasniewski Of London, England
"The World's Fastest Kicker"**

"To Never Bring A Gun to School...

Never To Use A Gun To Settle A Dispute...

To Advise My Friends To Never Bring A Gun To School Or Use One To Settle A Dispute!"



www.pledge.org

**Local Contact:
Dr. Germon Miller
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To Have Your
Student Pledges
Included To Be
Proudly Shared With
The White House!**



To: Educators and Prevention Professionals

Fr: Mary Lewis Grow, Founder and National Director
The Student Pledge Against Gun Violence

Re: Gun Violence prevention program for young people

I. The Student Pledge Against Gun Violence

I am writing to acquaint you with a national youth anti-gun-violence campaign, the Student Pledge Against Gun Violence, and to encourage you to introduce it into your schools. Since 1996, the Student Pledge has provided an important vehicle for beginning the dialogue with young people about the inappropriate use of guns to settle personal scores or problems.

Materials, including curriculum suggestions, are available on the website at www.pledge.org.

More than ten million young people nationwide have participated in the program since it began. The Student Pledge was supported at its inception by unanimous U.S. Senate Resolution and presidential proclamation and endorsed since then by most major national educational organizations, as well as many state governors.

The program began out of the conviction that young people need to be connected to the issue of youth gun violence in a way that suggests their own power to help change it. Each October, elementary, middle, and high school students across the country have the chance to sign a voluntary contract in which they promise never to bring a gun to school, never to resolve a personal problem or dispute with a gun, and to use their influence with their friends to keep them from solving problems with guns. A different pledge is used for elementary-aged children.

By taking part in a national observance and raising their collective voices, young people can visualize the multiplication effect of their own decisions and believe in their own power to be agents of positive change. They also learn that violence isn't inevitable -- something against which they are powerless.

The signing of the Pledge is the cornerstone of a Day of National Concern about Young People and Gun Violence, often weeks in the planning, that may include school assemblies, speakers, rallies, essay and poetry contests, displays of art work publicizing the toll of gun violence, and the beginning of many conversations between students and adults about gun violence.

II. Why involve your schools?

It is natural, when an unspeakable tragedy such as a school shooting occurs, to tell ourselves that similar tragedies are unlikely to happen near us.

If anyone had asked school administrators in Paducah Kentucky, Pearl Mississippi, Jonesboro Arkansas, Edinboro Pennsylvania, Springfield Oregon, Littleton Colorado, Santee California, Cold Spring or Red Lake Minnesota, and most recently, Blacksburg Virginia whether their community was likely to become the site of a school shooting, surely they would have answered that such a thing was inconceivable.

The sad reality is that any community with an angry or depressed young person who has access to a firearm is only a trigger-pull away from tragedy.

And while school shootings are relatively rare, most major American cities lose many too many young people to gun violence.

While there is no way to give young people an absolute bullet-proof shield against such events, there are things that schools and community leaders can do to help students become actively committed to their own and their peers' safety.

III. Recommendations

- Talk with young people about appropriate and inappropriate ways to solve problems. Begin the conversation! With literally thousands of American children and young people dying from gunshot each year, we need to talk with students about the problem and ways of preventing it.
- Honor the role that young people themselves can play in helping to solve the problems that affect them. We need to give them a voice. I have been struck, following each school shooting, by the panels of adults that assemble to discuss what to do about young people's violence, with no acknowledgment for the need to bring young people themselves to the table.
- Tell young people, again and again, that they matter to us, and that their decisions matter -- not only to themselves and their families but to their communities. We are all links in a chain, and that which affects them affects all of us. When things in their lives are broken, something in our community breaks too. We need to offer ourselves as collaborators and listeners in thinking out healthy ways to deal with problems.
- Encourage teachers to look for ways to integrate discussions about solving problems non-violently into academic subjects, without diluting or watering down the content areas of teaching. Really good discussions about avoiding life-threatening behaviors can be woven into literature classes, social studies, and all of the arts. (See the curriculum suggestions developed by the VOW Project and passed along, with permission, on the Student Pledge website. See also our website's recommendations for awareness-building activities that can go on all year.)

The Student Pledge should be much more than a piece of paper that comes out at a given moment on the Day of National Concern. It is important to create a meaningful context for the observance, a context that community members as well as educators can help provide.

Curriculum suggestions and names of books that deal with the topic of gun violence in ways that are appropriate to students of different ages are available not only on the website; they can be mailed out with hard-copy information packets at no cost to schools and administrators.

I'll close by quoting an email that I've saved from a guidance counselor in New York City whose school participated in the Student Pledge and the Day of National Concern. She wrote (I include only excerpts):

"We dedicated the entire day to bring our children [middle-school students] passionate speakers that brought home the results of violence and encouraged this pledge against it. These speakers made children realize that they have a choice about how they live in this world and that the wrong choices can lead to tragedy and loss.

"This day was certainly the high point of my career. Students were deeply affected by this day and have written personal notes to the speakers telling them that their lives were changed because of their messages. My colleagues that worked together on this day all share in this feeling and are committed to continue this kind of work."

Please let me know if I can answer any of your questions.

Sincerely,

Mary Lewis Grow
Founder and National Director
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2009 Student Pledge Against Gun Violence Rally In Washington, DC!

To establish a movement requires that a person is able to solidly generate a thought in the minds of individuals who will then go forth and share with others. To be a pathfinder requires that this same individual gives their life dedication to the idea inspiring others to replicate it transcending all racial, economic, religious and political differences.....a true legacy!

Mrs. Mary Lewis Grow – her legacy has touched the lives of millions. The founder of the **Student Pledge Against Gun Violence**, Mrs. Grow, a pathfinder, has kept the fires roaring in the hearts of countless youth to understand that avoiding firearms can save a life. The response has been over 10 million signed youth pledges in addition to many prominent adults recognizing her efforts such as President Obama during his tenure as Senator.

Dr. Germon “Mama G” Miller, a 30 year crisis educator/juvenile crew arbitrator, a 6 year coordinator for the **Student Pledge Against Gun Violence**, has trekked internationally to heighten awareness about the increase in youth violence with firearms. By incorporating her legacy as the only modern day woman to achieve Grandmaster 10th Degree Black Belt status as the founder of the Akeru Afrikan Discipline Martial Sciences, Dr. Miller’s request for support has been overwhelmingly accepted.

After their team meeting in Philadelphia this summer, Mrs. Grow & Dr. Miller finalized the logistics for the Washington, DC **Student Pledge Against Gun Violence Rally**. Therefore on **October 21, 2009** inspired individuals of all ages & cultures from around the world will meet in the **S.E. Quadrant, Lafayette Park between 1:00pm & 3:00pm** to let their voices be heard as to the urgency to eliminate youth violence by empowering students to make the informed choice when and how to avoid firearms.

The rally will host Student Pledge Youth Representatives from 10 states who will travel to Washington with their signed student pledges in back packs to hang them on a clothes line in the park to give a visual component to the rally.

With the expert assistance of **Mwalimu Preeti Kaur** (Akeru & Yudh Gatka Akhara Instructor) event sponsors from **Germany – Grandmaster Klaus Schumacher, Canada - Ustaad Saravjeet Singh** and **New Jersey - Grandmaster Quoc Tran**, have been able to host satellite events throughout 2009. Benefactors of the rally are **Grandmaster Dr. Tim & Linda Gilbert**. As the Regent for the **Daughters of the American Revolution Damascus, MD Chapter**, Mrs. Gilbert has worked tirelessly to personally collect signatures.

The VIP Guest of Honor will be the **International Representative, Grandmaster Gary Wasniewski of London, England**, who was honored with a Proclamation from the **Prince Georges County Council** during the 2008 Student Pledge Event for his dedication at the international level to eliminate youth violence. **Grandmaster Wasniewski**, known as the **fastest kicker in the world**, has assisted Dr. Miller by having her cameo in his most recent movie, where he portrays a police officer who prefers not to use guns to subdue criminals. Definitely this media source given an extraordinary boost to the **Student Pledge Against Gun Violence** Washington, DC Event when it was announced at the 2009 film premier in London, England.

For the complete history of the **Student Pledge Against Gun Violence and Student Pledge Forms** visit <http://www.pledge.org>. Also for participation in the October 21, 2009 event – contact Dr. Miller at thedisciplinescientist@yahoo.com or 202-550-1146.